
E-ALERT is compiled based on an email service we receive from the Department of State's Office of International Information Programs. We are sending it to you to alert you of the latest issues and debates in the United States.

It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch - - Committees, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and the Congressional Budget Office; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks, especially those in Washington; and (3) major reports from national professional associations. A few new high quality, high relevance think tank-sponsored books are also listed.

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Reports

- [Item#1](#)
Assessing Deeper Learning. Alliance for Education. July 28, 2011.

New assessments that measure deeper learning, whether students understand challenging content and are able to apply that knowledge to think critically, solve problems, communicate their understanding, and work with their peers, are essential if students are to develop the competencies they need to succeed in an increasingly complex world. Such assessments would not only measure whether students have developed those competencies, they would also foster deeper learning in the classroom, because of the influence of assessment on instruction. The brief shows what assessments that measure deeper learning would look like, how they are used in other countries, how technology can support their development, and how they can be implemented feasibly.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.all4ed.org/files/AssessingDeeperLearning.pdf> [PDF format, 8 pages].

Item#2

A Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment: Background and Congressional Options. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. James V. Saturno and Megan Suzanne Lynch. July 8, 2011.

One of the most persistent political issues facing Congress in recent decades is whether to require that the budget of the U.S. be in balance. Although a balanced federal budget has long been held as a political ideal, the accumulation of large deficits in recent years has heightened concern that some action to require a balance between revenues and expenditures may be necessary.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41907.pdf> [PDF format, 47 pages].

Item#3

China's New Leftists and the China Model Debate after the Financial Crisis. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Charles Freeman and Wen Jin Yuan. July 28, 2011.

In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, China's leadership is now paying specific attention to potential limits of the free market system as a basis for achieving optimum policy outcomes.

[Note: contain copyrighted material].

http://csis.org/files/publication/110728_Freeman_ChinaNewLeftists_Web.pdf [PDF format, 26 pages].

Item#4

China's North Korean Foreign Policy Decoded. YaleGlobal. Sunny Lee. July 28, 2011.

The U.S. and North Korea today meet in New York to determine if six-nation talks, aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear ambitions, can resume. Media and diplomatic attention focuses on China, too: The West expects China to scold its unruly neighbor to the north and make it behave. Yet China's influence is an unknown, explains Sunny Lee. Strong pressure from Beijing could aggravate the reckless regime with little to lose. In doling out food, fuel and advice, hoping to avoid instability, revolution or war, China acts in its own best interests, Lee argues. China's influence could soon be tested amid rumors that North Korea plans another nuclear test, aimed at demonstrating strength of its leadership, set to be under the helm of a man in his 20s. Relying on a mix of diplomacy, aid, cajoling and scolding, China's influence, remains uncertain and depends on day-to-day whims of an isolated dictator and North Korea's military command.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/chinas-north-korean-foreign-policy-decoded> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#5

Exploring the Role of Regional Transportation Projects as Rural Economy Drivers. National Association of Development Organizations. July 2011.

With case studies in Alabama, Oregon, and Vermont, the report explores regions where public transit is playing a role in connecting employees to work, getting people to services, and revitalizing downtown areas. Through partnerships at the local and regional level, regional planning and development organizations are facilitating improved mobility, which in turn supports the regional economy.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.ruraltransportation.org/uploads/RegTransit.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages].

Item#6

From Disputed Waters to Seas of Opportunity: Overcoming Barriers to Maritime Cooperation in East and Southeast Asia. The National Bureau of Asian Research. Clive Schofield et al. July 2011.

The report highlights findings from the National Bureau of Asian Research's three-year project "Maritime Energy Resources in Asia: Opportunities for Joint Development," which assesses maritime jurisdictional disputes and opportunities for cooperation in East and Southeast Asia.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/free/SR30_MERA.pdf [PDF format, 40 pages].

Item#7

The MetLife Report on American Grandparents: New Insights for a New Generation of Grandparents. Mature Market Institute, MetLife. July 2011.

There are 65 million grandparents in the U.S., an increase from 40 million in 1980. More than one in every four adults is a grandparent. A long way from being dependent, households that are headed by someone 45 to 64 years old command almost half (46%) of the nation's total household income. If households older than age 65 are added in, the grandparent age share of the nation's income rises to 60%, which is a full 10 percentage points higher than it was in 1980.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2011/mmi-american-grandparents.pdf> [PDF format, 23 pages].

Item#8

Public Sees Budget Negotiations as "Ridiculous," "Disgusting," "Stupid." Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. August 1, 2011.

From liberal Democrats to Tea Party Republicans, there is broad public consensus that the budget negotiations of recent weeks can be summed up in words such as ridiculous, disgusting, stupid, and frustrating. Nationwide, 72% describe the recent negotiations in negative terms.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://people-press.org/2011/08/01/public-sees-budget-negotiations-as-%E2%80%9Cridiculous%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%9Cdisgusting%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%9Cstupid/> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#9

A U.S. Debt -- and Prestige -- Downgrade? Council on Foreign Relations. Christopher Alessi. July 29, 2011.

Whatever the outcome of the debt ceiling debate, many analysts expect a downgrade in the U.S. debt rating because of doubts about deficit-reduction plans. The fallout could include higher borrowing costs, a weaker dollar, and market turbulence, according to the report.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.cfr.org/financial-crises/us-debt----prestige----downgrade/p25565> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#10

The U.S. Export Control System and the President's Reform Initiative. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Ian F. Fergusson and Paul K. Kerr. July 14, 2011.

The 112th Congress may consider reforms of the U.S. export control system. The balance between national security and export competitiveness has made the subject of export controls controversial for decades. The creation of a single control list has been the Administration's focus to date.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R41916.pdf> [PDF format, 32 pages].